

## Interview Etiquette and Know-How

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Thinking now about how you will present yourself during the interview will make all the difference in your success.

### **Before You Go**

Make sure that you are giving yourself plenty of time. You should plan to arrive about 10 minutes early. Before you leave, do a check on the following:

- Do you have extra copies of your resume printed on resume paper? Are they easily accessible and kept in a portfolio or somewhere where they will not get wrinkled or dirty?
- Do you have all the information you need to fill out a job application, including references?
- Do you have the directions on how to get where you are going and where to park?
- Do you have a phone number to call in case an emergency prevents you from arriving on time?

### **Upon Arrival**

From the minute that you arrive, you should expect that you are being evaluated. People you meet in the parking lot, on the elevator, or in the lobby may have an impact on your evaluation. In fact, it is very common for an employer to ask the receptionist or other staff members for their opinion of job candidates.

### **Introduction to the Employer**

The first few seconds you are introduced to the employer are critical. No matter how nervous you are, smile, exude energy, offer a firm handshake, and introduce yourself.

### **Asking Questions**

Always have questions to ask. If you do not have questions to ask at the end of the interview, the employer may take it as a sign of disinterest or lack of preparation. Be careful, however, not to ask a question about material that has already been discussed. This will make it appear that you were not listening. A sample list of questions can be found in your course materials.

Before you leave, be sure to tell the employer that you are interested in the job and that you look forward to hearing from him. You might say something like,

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*After our conversation today, I am even more excited about the opportunity to work for your company. I really believe I could make a significant contribution in this role. Afterward, ask for next steps and a timetable. What is the next step in the process? or When should I expect to hear from you regarding a decision?*

### **Discussing Salary**

Topics to avoid initiating early in the interview process are salary, benefits, vacation time, compensation packages, and so forth. Many employers will take this as a cue that you are interested in the job only for the money and not for what you can contribute. If at any time during the first interview the employer brings up salary, tread lightly. The time to discuss salary is after the offer has been made. If you must give an answer, be sure to use a salary range—one that you have investigated prior to the interview. Additional information about navigating salary negotiations can be found in your course materials.

### **Gathering Business Cards**

Ask for a business card from each person who interviews you. This ensures that you have his or her proper name, title, and address.